

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:
  - a compression processing section which compresses and encodes image data to form encoded image data;
  - a first storage section which stores the encoded image data;
  - a code separation section which separates ~~and stores~~ the image data encoded by the compression processing section into at least two separated encoded image data ~~in separate regions of the storage section~~ in accordance with a separation scheme set;
  - a second storage section including separate storage regions for storing the separated encoded image data;
  - a key information preparation section which generates, as key information, information indicating ~~a region~~ the separate storage regions of the second storage section in which ~~each of the separated eoded encoded image data~~ encoded image data ~~[[is]] are stored in the storage section~~ and information indicating the separation scheme set;
  - a third storage section which stores the key information;
  - a code synthesis section which synthesizes the separated encoded image data stored in the second storage section for reproducing the encoded image data, in accordance with the key information stored in the third storage section; and
  - an extension processing section which extends the encoded image data synthesized by the code synthesis section.
2. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data into direct-current and alternating-current components.
3. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data into red, green, and blue components.

4. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data is separated into cyan, magenta, yellow, and black components.

5. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data into data blocks.

6. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, which further comprising an interface section to be connected to an external device to communicate therewith, said external device having a storage section in which the encoded data separated by the code separation section is stored, and in which the coded data storage control section stores the separated encoded data in the storage section and in the storage section of the external device, and the key information preparation section generates the key information including information that indicates a storage region in which the separated coded data is stored in the external device.